

“People need to experience the power of real food”

NAME: Tina Deubert.

WEBSITE: www.foodworks4u.co.uk.

QUALIFICATIONS: DipNT (CNM), BEd (Hons), Bowen Therapy (ECBS).

TRAINING: College of Naturopathic Medicine, European College of Bowen Studies.

How long did it take for you to qualify?

Three years.

Where do you practise?

Lewes, East Sussex.

What's your main therapy/modality and why?

I am a nutritional therapist, cook and teacher. My focus is on giving people practical and sustainable ways of eating better, because I feel that busy lives and a couple of generations who haven't learnt to cook and eat together have combined to contribute to where we are now, health-wise.

It seems to me that the most valuable contribution I can make is to inspire people to feel that they can cook and properly prepare healthy food without spending all day on it.

Why did you decide to become a practitioner?

Like most of us, because of my own health issues: PMS in my 30s, which disappeared with the help of a nutritional therapist; a slipped disc or two aged 40, which showed me how powerful Bowen is, and led to my Bowen training; arthritis in my 40s which I completely resolved with diet (though, not being as “good” now, I have some minor symptoms!); cancer treatment and the low energy and fatigue



which followed the treatment responded well to diet and resolved completely once I qualified and found the missing piece of the jigsaw (which for me was protein).

While practising as a Bowen Therapist I found myself offering general nutritional advice to my clients. It seemed the logical next step to train and qualify as a Nutritional Therapist.

How long have you been in practice?

I qualified as a Bowen therapist in 2006 and in nutritional therapy in 2011, so the best part of 11 years.

What's your main inspiration?

I would say that my lifelong interest in cooking and inventing

new recipes, alongside a strong feeling from a very early age that only real food will do, has motivated me to do what I'm doing now. I know people are short of time, and often short of skills too, so my aim is to help people feel they really CAN make a difference to what they eat and how they feel.

You've developed your own way of helping people change what they eat. Can you tell us a bit about this?

A few years ago I began a weekly salad stall at the local market. The intention was to use this as my “shop window” – an opportunity to show people nutritious and delicious food while telling them about nutritional therapy and

my healthy eating courses and workshops. This became a thing in its own right, and I had the opportunity to open up a take-away salad bar in a local kitchen shop, which I eventually took over and turned into Tina's Kitchen.

It's a simple formula – six rainbow salads with dressings to complement the ingredients and aid digestion, with protein items to accompany them such as frittata, hummus and my signature seedjack (a savoury protein snack).

We make a couple of hot stews a day, one meat/fish and one vegan, and a few no-added-sugar cakey things. I don't use grains or obvious starches, as I really think most people are better without them, and customers report having good afternoons with no slumps or cravings when they eat our lunches. Everything is gluten-free, and ingredients are organic.

My aim is to help customers experience how different they feel with nutrient-dense, lower-carb food, and to plant seeds of inspiration so they will go home and try some of the ideas themselves, which they often say they do. The shop is a great way of talking to people about diet and giving snippets of advice, too.

My business is low waste and the food is as local as possible and organic. I use imported ingredients like lemons, limes, oranges, turmeric, ginger, nuts and seeds alongside supplies from local vegetable growers and an organic wholesaler who sources things as close to home as possible. Meat and fish comes from local farmers. We use compostable cornstarch packaging, compost our food waste, re-use and recycle as much as possible and produce less waste than the average family of four



each week.

I've just been shortlisted for the Lewes District Green Business award, which I'm delighted about, as I strongly believe that our health and the planet's health are inextricably linked. I believe we need to source as much food as possible from our own area to reduce food miles, make as much of our own food as possible, reduce packaging and so on. I also have a bit of a thing about our food fashions driving up prices and depriving local populations of what has traditionally been a staple, nutritious and cheap food. To me this is immoral, as we have the most amazing range of food in our country and in Europe.

Tina's Kitchen is coming to an end, so what's next?

The shop has taken up more and more of my time, leaving less and less for workshops and clients. This has prompted a change of focus which will happen this month. I'm closing the food side of the business at the end of July and will return to the local market once a month. I'll be keeping the premises and running lots more workshops and courses, as well as taking on more clients and creating and

publishing more recipes.

I want to do some collaborations with other practitioners, too – I've been chatting with a yoga teacher and someone who works with pregnant mums, as well as other NTs, so that could be an exciting development.

I hope to do occasional pop-up suppers for fun, and develop some work with local businesses and possibly cafés and restaurants who might be interested in making their food healthier and/or gluten free.

The new name hasn't been decided yet; I may even keep Tina's Kitchen, with a subtitle (if that's the right word) of Nutrition and Health Hub.

What conditions or types of client do you see most of?

I am really happy seeing people who have quite basic issues like low energy, digestive issues, extra weight and low mood. I love the massive difference very small changes in diet can make to so many people.

For me, it is so much about the food and the basics – people need to experience the power of real food and find out what works for them. So I'm very



much a generalist and suspect I will stay that way. That's why I like running my courses and workshops; while one size doesn't fit all, I do believe there are general principles which many if not most people can benefit from.

What is your favourite type of client?

Most of them – if they've taken the time and money to come

and see me, they are engaged in their health and prepared to make changes; I couldn't ask for more. I'm always humbled by the excitement and enthusiasm that a client leaves a consultation with, or goes home with after the first session of my course. It's a bit scary knowing you can have that much influence, and then exhilarating when you find out they've had some success!

→ **What is the most challenging type of symptoms/illness/problem that you get presented with?**

I've tried to be honest about what I am able to help with, and as I've not had the time for research over the last three years, I have tended to pass any more complex cases to other local nutritional therapists.

What one thing is absolutely essential to you in your practice?

My kitchen. I see clients at the shop, where I have a working domestic-like kitchen with lots of ingredients that I can create something with or give a taster of. If I had to move premises I would have to set up a rudimentary kitchen.

Also, because I really enjoy creating new recipes to tick nutritional boxes, I need to have a kitchen and ingredients to hand. I am really looking forward to being able to get up from my desk and pop to the kitchen to try out a new idea.

My healthy eating courses, divided into five sessions, look at blood sugar balancing, fats, digestion, nutrient density and lifestyle measures. These, along with the workshops I will be resuming in the autumn, are the most effective way I have of helping people change their behaviour. I've also done talks for staff and parents at schools, and am hoping to do more of this kind of work, too.

I have produced a recipe booklet which has been well received by customers, and will publish a complete collection of Tina's Kitchen recipes in the autumn. Part of my next phase will be developing and publishing more recipes. (The recipe booklet costs £6 plus p&p, and is available from Tina by emailing tinadeubert@gmail.com.)



Which CAM book has helped or inspired you most, so far in your career?

I do keep coming back to *The Nutrient Bible* by Henry Oseicki, and I have found Natasha Campbell-McBride inspiring. Cookery books, of course, are important, though I usually only use them for inspiration; I have a great collection at the shop and Ottolenghi is a favourite.

Why do you do what you do?

Because I know food makes such a difference, and I find simply having conversations with customers opens doors and starts the process of change. The feedback which comes with having a shop – on the taste of the food, the success in following my recipes, how clients respond to my advice – is a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

If money, time and effort were no object, what one thing would you change about your practice or integrative healthcare in general?

I would start a chain of Tina's Kitchens, promoting genuinely healthy, low-carb, gluten-free, high-quality food on every High Street, hospital premises, airport and railway station! In the world of fantasy I would clone myself so that I could do it all.

What piece of advice would you give to newly qualified practitioners who are just setting up a business?

Don't be in a hurry to find a niche – take your time and see what inspires you.

One thing I remember feeling was that I had to get the first consultation time down to an hour or so, and that created too much pressure. I think we should take more time in the early

days so that we can learn how to streamline and hone our skills – time spent on this is an investment.

And really, what does it matter if the client goes away feeling you've given them some extra time? I think a related thing is to avoid measuring yourself against anybody else; we all work in different ways, we all have different skills and strengths, and it's really important to tune in to those and be true to yourself.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a practitioner?

Until now it has been time – the shop is a more than full-time job, which means that reading and keeping up to date has been difficult. I have relied on the *IHCAN* conferences and magazine (honestly!).

What would you like to see covered in *IHCAN* magazine that we're not getting to?

Maybe more about preconception, pregnancy and feeding children; they are the future, and if we can influence the way they are fed we could play a big part in reducing the burden of obesity and chronic illness.

I'm doing a short course in children's nutrition this month at ION, and am looking forward to converting the material into a course or workshop for parents. ॥॥॥॥॥



We know our practitioners are quietly getting on with changing people's lives, every day – and we want to celebrate and share the inspiration. *In Practice* is coordinated by regular contributor Rebecca Smith, who runs a successful practice of her own, established 20 years ago. Contact her direct to be part of the feature: rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk, and follow her on Twitter: [@NCHHealthClinic](https://twitter.com/NCHHealthClinic).